

**CURRENT BROCHURE**

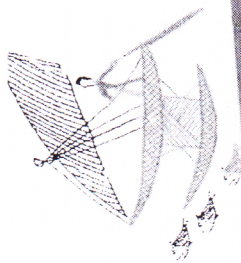


# *Diving and Snorkeling*

Come and explore a unique new  
World Heritage listed underwater paradise

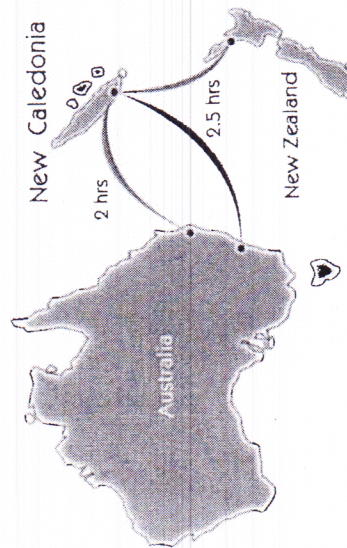
# *in New Caledonia*





# The world's largest lagoon

Home to over 900 varieties of coral, many unique to New Caledonia, and an amazing collection of over 5,000 marine species.



Divers from around the world have long known about New Caledonia's underwater wonderland, but until the lagoons and reef were recently listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage site it was a well kept secret from snorkeling fanatics! And it's all a short flying time from Australia (only 2 hours from Brisbane and under 3 hours from Sydney).

The lagoon covers an area of approximately 24,000 square kilometers and is protected by a 8,000 kilometres of coral reef structures, featuring crystal clear waters and exceptional flora and fauna (many species of which are endemic to New Caledonia).

The reef is also located just 30 minutes from Nouméa which allows more exploring time and less travel.

Those new to snorkeling can try the Lagoon Trek at Kuendu. Duck Island is another interesting experience, just a few minutes from Nouméa by water taxi, it features a protected nature reserve with a unique trail where you follow special signs through the marine life underwater.

Amedée Island is also a short boat trip away and one of New Caledonia's 'must do' day trips.

One hour from Nouméa is Tenia Island which lies in the centre of an unspoilt marine reserve with an inspiring discovery trail. You may even swim with dolphins and turtles that frequent these pristine waters.

A 20 minute flight will take you to the Isle of Pines, where you must not miss the amazing 'natural pool' at Oro Bay,

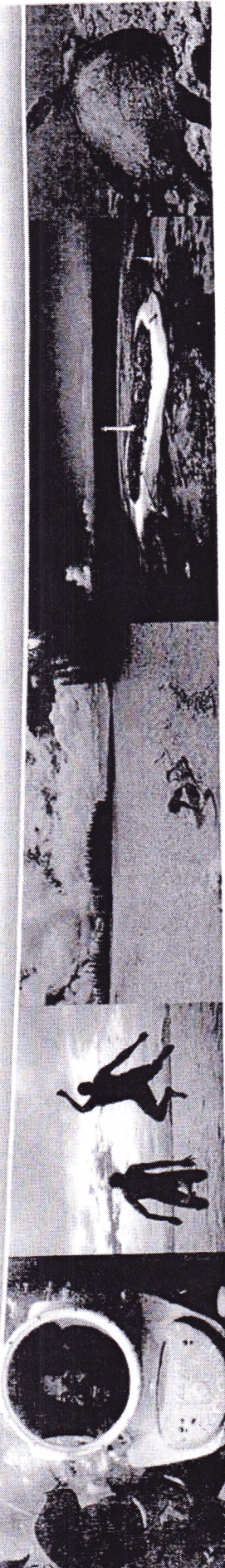
## 10 GREAT REASONS TO DIVE AND SNORKEL IN NEW CALEDONIA

- The pristine waters of the world's largest lagoon
- The world's 2nd largest Coral Reef
- Now on the UNESCO World Heritage List
- An ideal water temperature (21 to 28°)
- Immense variety of vegetal and animal species
- Diverse choice of underwater landscapes
- Virgin and rarely visited dive sites
- Dives adapted to respective levels of expertise
- Professional dive operators and compliance to strict regulations
- Optimum security decompression chamber

which has been described as a 'massive sparkling aquarium with exquisite coral and marine life'. And if it's 'undiscovered' you're after, Lifou in the Loyalty Islands offers incredible water clarity and abundance of sealife (see back page).

There is a choice of experienced dive and snorkel operators who offer a range of full day and half-day trips.

For something truly unique, there is a special night snorkeling trip that uses special torches to illuminate the fantastic fluorescent corals. C'est magnifique!





and 2<sup>nd</sup> largest coral reef

Boulouparis

**La corne de Ténia (Tenia Horn):** features a cliff face with a coral massif which harbours lots of different fauna (numerous fish species, shoals of grey sharks, turtles, eagle rays, pelagic marine life). Minimum Level 1 is required.

## Bourail

**La fausse passe de l'îlot Vert (the false pass of the green islet):** provides numerous possibilities, from initiation dives to deep dives. Abundant marine life: Napoleon fish, black pointer sharks, leopard sharks, stingrays, leopard rays, crockling and large shoals of pelagic marine life.

**Le grand coude de Kélé (Kélé elbow):** nice vertical drop of 18 to 70 metres with some good sized canyons and magnificent coral. Grey sharks, eagle rays, shoals of becuene fish and rockling.

**La faille de l'îlot Shark (Shark islet rift):** dive in an old riverbed invaded by the sea. Guitar rays can still be found.

Hienqhène

**Daiman Reef – Cathédrale:** a deep rift leads into a tunnel which emerges into an area frequented by large pelagic marine life. The dive then continues down for more than 55 metres along a breathtaking high wall. Beautiful gorgonia of humpback parrot fish (October, November), tuna, barracuda, lazars, grey sharks and 'albinmarginatus'.

**Hienghène Pass:** large humpback whales can often be observed between July and November. The dive begins with the descent into a well which emerges under a large arch dotted with gorgonia.

**Hiengu Pass:** the Fonti reef is a large coral massif sheltered from the tradewinds. Two large caves with ceilings that open up to the surface with pristine coral, where many rockling have made their home.

## Isle of Pines

**Le jardin d'Eden (Garden of Eden):** a succession of rifts between 5 and 50 metres. Soft corals, gorgons, alcyonaires and sponges. Recommended for experienced divers.

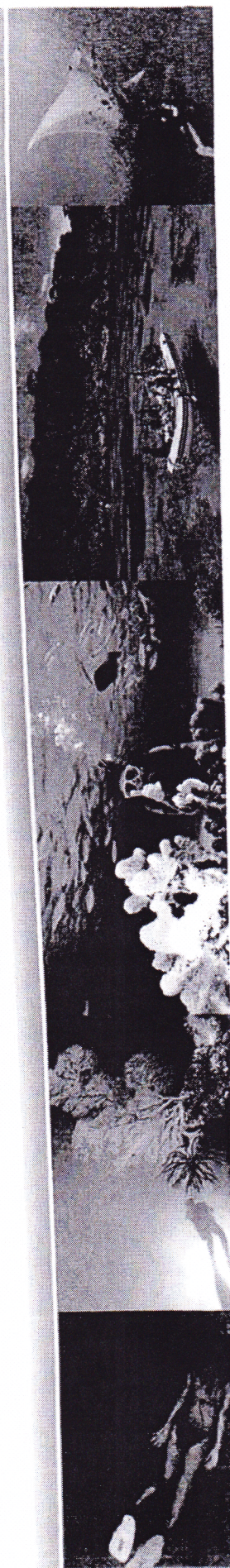
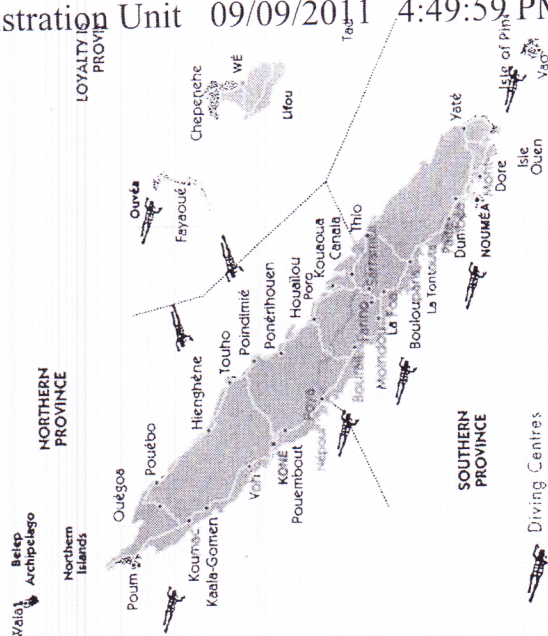
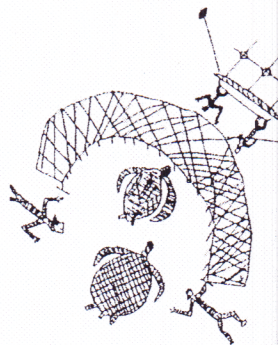
La vallée des gorgones (Gorgon Valley): abundant fauna, numerous rifts.

**La grotte de la 3e (The 3rd cave):** unique dive in a forest with stalactites and stalagmites in the immersed part of the cave. Recommended for experienced divers.

**Kasmira Reef:** ideal for divers and snorkelers, with a high seabed full of fish and leopard sharks.

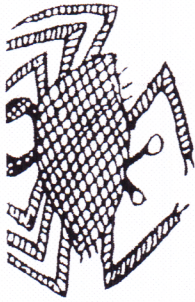
## Mont-Dore

L'Aiguille de Prony (Prony needle): a huge chimney grading originates 38 metres under water and rises to 2 metres below the surface. A kingdom for bivalves and spawning season for rockling in November.





# now on the World Heritage List



## Nouméa

**L'île aux Canards (Duck Island):** Under water pathway for snorkeling in a marine reserve. Ideal site for initiation dives and guided visits organised by the Centre for Initiation of the Environment.

**La patate à Tépava (The "Patate" at Tépava):** ideal for divers and snorkelers. This coral formation lies at a depth of 12 metres and features several straight tunnels. Abundant fauna, large rockling, stingrays, small lagoon sharks and turtles.

**The Wreck of the Snark:** a Panamanian cargo ship sunk in 1942 near a sandbank. Leopard and black spotted rays are frequent.

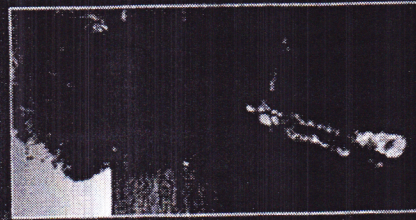
**La patate du Phare Amédée:** perfect for divers and snorkelers, with an underwater reserve that is home to parrotfish, yellow 'barbillons', butterfly fish and more.

**The Wreck of the Dieppoise:** the last wooden patrol boat of the Royal Navy sunk in 1988 has become a dive site, located 26 metres underwater. Superb rockling and myriads of other fish. An ideal dive for beginners.

**La patate du Sournais (The sneaky patate):** rises up from a 10 metre seabed. In calm weather, the weak current makes this dive ideal for beginners. A large shoal of yellow cord 'mulletts' adds a beautiful touch of gold. During the cooler season, living nautilus can also be observed.

**The Wreck of the Humbolt:** sunk in 1993 to make an artificial reef. This site is inhabited by castex rockling, night

## Guided Snorkeling



Guided snorkeling trips are offered by several well-established local tour

operators such as Aquanature, Ticti Diving and Babou Cote Lagon). Ideal for

the whole family, children are welcome and very well catered for. A chance for ocean discovery along with the opportunity to picnic on a coral island makes this the ideal day excursion.

mullet and chicken scorpion fish.

**The southern point of the Tabou Reef:** the very jagged slope of the reef ends on a seabed of 25 metres. The marine life is abundant: porcelain crayfish, 'carangues', tazars.

**Boulari Pass:** is known for its concentration of fish: large round loach, shoals of blue loach and 'carangues'. With luck, you will witness the majestic Mania Ray 'ballet'.

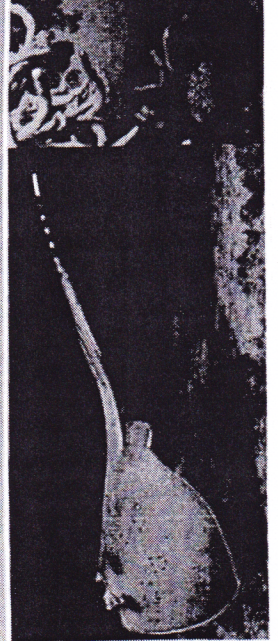
## Poindimié

Divers will be spoilt for choice with the centre's 50 sites characterised by a relief made of rifts, arches and canyons scattered with gorgonia and 'alcyonnaires' and a diversity of fauna (small and large fish), as well as other crawling sea creatures.

## Ouvéa

The Ouvéa atoll and its cluster of small islands protect one of the most beautiful islands in the world with the longest beach in New Caledonia featuring 25 kilometres of fine white sand. The diving sites outside the coral reef are protected from the tradewinds. Here drift diving is the norm.

This is an indicative list only!





# is a diving and snorkeling paradise



New Caledonia is one of the rare places in the world where there are so many species living side-by-side.

All year long, the New Caledonian lagoon unveils an exceptional fauna: parrot fish, blue rockling, grouper, leopard rays, reef sharks, tuna, tazars, red snappers, red mullets... as well as the lobsters and their local cousins, the 'popinées', and the turtles and dugongs.

Add to this landscape a luxurious flora: caverns decorated with bryozoaires and gorgones, sponges in weird and wonderful forms, fluorescent coral, flower shaped, in balls or bushes. Diademic urchins, star fish, and crinoides.

Shellfish enthusiasts can discover a multitude of marine mollusks, in particular magnificent cowries like the Cyprae Niger and lambis.

With a little luck, divers can admire endemic nautilus floating near the surface. These animals, veritable 'living fossils' usually frequent the great depths (150-600 m).

During the months of December and January, 'clouds' of young cuttlefish swarm the anchorages located on diving sites.

In February and March, turtles swim ashore to lay their eggs. The dugongs (sea cows) are plentiful, particularly around 'Ilot Maitre' located not far from Nouméa, basking on the surface of the water. New Caledonia has the largest population of dugongs in Oceania and 3rd largest in the world.

April signals the beginning of the spawning season for the Daggit sharks lasting until June. The females are particularly

The diving in New Caledonia complies with strict regulations, and is supervised by professional and experienced dive monitors with advanced security conditions including a decompression chamber.

friendly towards divers, especially near the Boulari Pass.

The Manta Rays join in the spectacle, much to the amazement and pleasure of underwater photographers.

Towards September, the arrival of the warm season and trade winds signal the beginning of the hatching period. The lagoon is invaded by myriads of small fish that can be found particularly in caves and wrecks, whilst huge flocks of sea birds dart in all directions on the surface in search of prey.

Game fish (bonito, tuna and enormous 'carangues') and other species take part in the display.

From mid-October to November, the huge rocklings begin

their migration. One of their main destinations is the fossil canyon in Dumbéa where the famous 'rocking wall', which descends from 11 to 33 metres, is considered a 'meeting place' for rockling. This is a magnificent dive in the current for experienced divers.

Numerous wrecks are also accessible to divers, some of which have been especially sunk for dive site.

## Unspoilt and sparsely populated.

The immense expanse of the New Caledonian lagoons, combined with the relatively low number of divers, has ensured that the majority of dive sites are beautifully protected.

Today, the dive and snorkel centres are scattered over the whole of the archipelago. The types of dives available are also varied, adapted to the levels and preferences of each diver from introductory dives to pothole diving, initiation dives, dive courses and qualifications, photo-reports and night dives.

Whatever your preference, most dives take place between 0 and 15 metres, reinforced by a pleasant water temperature (between 21 and 28° depending on the season).

